

REAT TO HAVE YOU BACK, HOWARD!



KENNEDY
return

HOWARD Kennedy, who has not played competitive football since tearing knee ligaments halfway through last season, marked his comeback with a typical goal for Wycombe Wanderers in Saturday's friendly against Bedford at Loakes Park.

Kennedy, whose damaged ligaments at Barking in February, threatened to end his playing career, has been working on his fitness for weeks throughout the summer. Early morning runs and exercises were all part of his comeback routine.

The injury was put to the test on Saturday — and Howard came through with flying colours. His second half free-kick from 25 yards that crashed into the net, capped a highly encouraging performance.

Wycombe Wanderers 2, Bedford Town 2 REPORT BY STUART EARP

As expected, most of the familiar faces were back at Loakes Park. The goalkeepers, back four and midfield are all the same, which gives manager John Reardon an excellent base to work on. One thing that must be worrying John, however, is the front line.

There was only one new forward on view — 17-year-old youngster Glyn Brown, who was playing for Luton Reserves last season. Skilful on the ball, Brown looks promising although he has plenty to learn yet. He was partnered up front by Dylan Evans and Tony Horseman, the latter having only just returned from a holiday.

Absent from last year's forward line were Ian Pearson, away scoring Millwall's

goal in their 1-1 draw at Portsmouth, and Howard Kettleborough, who turned out in the Bedford side.

These two players scored about 70 of Wycombe's goals between them last season and it will be no easy task to replace them, should Pearson re-join the professional game which seems certain.

Clearly Saturday's front three will not be strong enough to carry Wanderers' hopes for goals this season and new forwards will be desperately needed.

Elsewhere, the manager has few worries. The defence looked as strong as ever while, with Mick Hollifield soon to return, midfield looks promising with Graham Mackenzie improving steadily and Kennedy now playing again. Bill Roberts, a utility

man, will prove a valuable asset either at the back or in mid-field.

There were two other newcomers on view, left sided mid-field man Paul Conway, who looked useful, and Glen Darnell who had the misfortune to present Bedford with their second equaliser.

Overall, Wanderers should have won this game comfortably. Their attacks were nicely constructed from the back with intricate and clever passing belying the greasy surface. Constant drizzle throughout the game certainly made a change from the usual heatwave pre-season games. Many chances were created but a poor percentage taken.

OVER THE TOP

Evans twice drove over the top while Horseman once burst through the Bedford defence but toe-poked the ball wide. At the other end Peter Spittle showed lightning reflexes when taking Ray Newton's header and then dived well to parry Adams' drive. Paul Birdseye raced in to clear the ball away as Newson threatened to score.

Wanderers went ahead after 43 minutes with a well worked goal. Kennedy took his time before spotting an opening through the defence. His well placed pass gave Horseman the room to run through and drive past Ray Peacock.

The Blues' lead lasted only a minute. Bedford made it 1-1 when Adams swept down the right and crossed to the near post where Newson clipped the ball home first time for a glorious goal.

Mackenzie, who had a fine game, sent in a good strike soon into the second half which was only three minutes old when Wanderers went ahead again. A free-kick 25 yards-out was driven low and hard past the wall by Kennedy and into the corner of the net.

BRILLIANT SAVES

Bedford's substitute goalkeeper, Kevin Blackwell produced a string of brilliant saves in the closing stages, particularly from Horseman a Mackenzie before a mistake the Blues' defence gave Bedford an equaliser. Darnell won the ball from Adams but then mistimed a back pass to Maske Adams nipped in and cross into the middle where News headed home.

Darnell, who played for Oswestry last season, almost made amends when his head was cleared off the line at the other end but Wycombe had been content with a share of the spoils from the first outing the season.

WYCOMBE: P. Spittle (sub. J. Mask 45 mins); P. Birdseye, K. Mead (sub. 45 mins); A. Phillips, R. Davies; G. Mackenzie, H. Kennedy, W. Roberts (sub. P. Conway 73 mins); A. Horseman, D. Evans, G. Brown.

BEDFORD: R. Peacock (sub. Blackwell 65 mins); D. Skinn (sub. Richardson 45 mins); T. Gould, Goodie, R. Folds (sub. N. Coolley 45 mins); G. Burdett, M. Goodall (sub. Dade 45 mins); L. Adams, R. Newson, Kettleborough (sub. W. Horn 65 mins); P. Spillane.

Referee: B. Robinson.

Half-time: 1-1. **Goalscorers:** Wycombe — Horseman (43), Kennedy (48). Bedford — Newson 2 (44, 82).



By Horseman drills home Wycombe's first goal of the season during Saturday's pre-season friendly with Bedford.